UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/48/346
17 September 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-eighth session
Agenda item 72 (f) of the provisional agenda*

REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/48/150 and Corr.1.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 9 December 1992, the General Assembly adopted without a vote decision 47/421, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean". By that decision, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its forty-eighth session on the activities of the regional centres.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request and covers the period from August 1992 to July 1993.

II. FUNCTIONING OF THE REGIONAL CENTRES

3. It should be recalled that the General Assembly, by its resolution 46/37 F of 9 December 1991 on the regional centres, decided that, to ensure the continued financial viability of the centres, the administrative costs of the centres should be financed from the regular budget. Subsequently, the report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates under programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 (A/C.5/47/62) to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly stated that an additional appropriation of $300,000 would be required to cover the estimated 1993 administrative costs of the three regional centres. The General Assembly, by resolution 47/219 B of 6 May 1993, approved the commitment authority of $150,000 under section 37 (Department of Political Affairs) of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 in order to provide for the administrative support of the regional centres.

4. The Secretary-General wishes to emphasize that, in accordance with the terms on which the regional centres were established, voluntary contributions remain the primary source of financing the activities of the centres and are thus needed to enable the centres to carry out their mandated tasks.

5. During the period under review, the financial situation of the regional centres remained precarious due to a continued decline in voluntary contributions to their trust funds. Under the circumstances, the programmes of the centres have been readjusted accordingly, resulting in drastically curtailed activities.

A. Regional Centre in Africa

6. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa was established in 1986. It functions under the auspices of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, which acts as the focal point for coordinating inputs to the activities of the Centre by pertinent organs, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system. The Centre is located at Lomé, Togo.

1. Objectives and activities of the Centre

7. The Centre continued to carry out its mandate as contained in General Assembly resolution 40/151 G of 16 December 1985. According to that resolution, "the Centre shall provide, upon request, substantive support for initiatives and other efforts of Member States of the African region towards the realization of measures of peace, arms limitation and disarmament in the region, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, as well as coordinate the implementation of regional activities in Africa under the World Disarmament Campaign" (renamed the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme in 1992).

8. During the reporting period, the Centre's activities continued to focus primarily on the dissemination of information relating to disarmament, peace and security within the African context. Due to serious financial constraints faced by the Centre and prevailing local situation, the Centre has been operating in a very limited manner.

9. From 24 to 26 February 1993, an International Seminar on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Southern Africa was organized at Windhoek, Namibia, by the Centre in cooperation with the Government of Namibia and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation Namibia Office. The seminar was attended by high-level military and civilian experts from the member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Experts from the African National Congress and individual researchers and experts from South Africa and other parts of Africa, as well as from around the world were also invited to attend.

10. The seminar was addressed at its opening by the Minister of Defence of Namibia, Mr. Peter Mweshihange, on behalf of the host Government and by the Director of the United Nations Programmes Against Apartheid and for Palestinian Rights, Mr. Johan Nordenfelt. A keynote address was delivered by the Minister for Presidential Affairs and Public Administration of Botswana, Lt. General M. S. Merafhe, on behalf of the President of Botswana, the current Chairman of SADC.

11. The main objective of the seminar was to provide an opportunity for participants to explore the various ways and means of fostering mutual confidence and trust in inter-State relations among southern African States with a view to reinforcing development opportunities in the post-apartheid era. Topics addressed by the seminar included the following: African military and peace-keeping operations; security and shared benefits of peace; current security situation in southern Africa; The Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe: lessons for southern Africa; civil-military relations; accountability and transparency in national defence matters; effects of socio-economic conditions and of refugees and demobilization on peace, progress and stability in southern Africa; monitoring mechanisms and shared values of human rights and governance in southern Africa; confidence- and security-building in the military field; integration of government and guerrilla forces; disarmament, demobilization and joint military training in southern Africa; possible collective security and collective defence arrangements in southern Africa. Papers presented at the seminar were published by the Office for Disarmament Affairs in its Topical Papers Series, No. 14.

12. In addition, the Centre provided substantive and organizational support to the meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa from 8 to 12 March 1993, in Bujumbura, Burundi. The Centre will continue to provide similar support to the Committee's last meeting for 1993, which took place at Libreville, Gabon, from 30 August-3 September.

13. Due to lack of sufficient financial resources, the workshop on the issues of refugees and regional security in East Africa, proposed by the Government of Kenya to be held at Nairobi during the second half of 1993, has been postponed.

14. As regards information activities, the Centre continued to publish, for wide distribution, its quarterly newsletter entitled African Peace Bulletin (APB), which focuses on relevant developments in the field of disarmament and related issues in Africa.

15. In response to invitations extended to the Centre, the Acting Director of the Centre participated in an international conference on Security, Cooperation and Development in Southern Africa, organized by the Peace Research Institute of Frankfurt from 23 to 27 May 1993, at Windhoek, Namibia, where he made a presentation entitled "Collective security and the Agenda for Peace: assessing relevant elements". The Centre was also represented at a workshop organized by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) at Accra, Ghana, from 21-23 April 1993.

2. Staffing and finance

16. Pursuant to paragraph 3 of Assembly resolution 44/117 F of 15 December 1989 the post of Director of the Centre was established in January 1990 under the regular budget. Since the resignation of its Director in July 1992, responsibility for the Centre has been assumed by its Acting Director. At the same time, severe financial constraints faced by the regional centres have necessitated freezing three General Service posts of the Centre since 1 July 1993.

17. Since the submission of the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/47/359), voluntary contributions in the amount of $114,478 have been pledged to the Centre, and a total of $133,563 had been received as of July 1993. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Governments of Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, and Norway, as well as to the Friederich Ebert Foundation, for their generous contributions.

B. Regional Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean

18. Established in 1987, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean functions under the auspices of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, which acts as the focal point for coordinating inputs to the activities of the Centre by pertinent organs, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system. The Centre is located at Lima, Peru.

1. Objectives and activities of the Centre

19. The General Assembly, by its resolution 41/60 J of 3 December 1986, decided that the Centre should provide, upon request, substantive support for the initiatives and other activities of the Member States of the Latin American region for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament, and for the promotion of economic and social development through appropriate reutilization of available resources, and should coordinate the implementation of the regional activities in Latin America under the World Disarmament Campaign (now the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme).

20. During the reporting period, from August 1992 to July 1993, the Centre, despite severe financial constraints, continued to fulfil its mandate in so far as possible and expand its contacts and cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations, research centres, academic institutions and other United Nations bodies so as to further the objectives of the Centre.

21. As part of its programme for promoting awareness on regional security issues, the Centre held a workshop at Lima on 1 October 1992 on the topic of military expenditures in South America and their relation to overall government expenditures in general and social expenditures in particular. The workshop was attended by Peruvian diplomats, researchers in the field and the military.

22. In cooperation with the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Centre organized a regional seminar on arms proliferation and confidence- and security-building measures in Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in Asuncion, Paraguay, from 18 to 20 January 1993. The seminar was funded largely from voluntary contributions by the Government of Canada, with additional financial support from the Governments of Norway and Paraguay. It was opened by the Minister a.i. of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay, Ambassador Marcos Martinez Mendieta. Some 40 experts from Governments, the military and the academic community from within and outside the region participated in their personal capacity. The seminar focused on three main areas: the military dimension of security; security and its economic dimension; and regional mechanisms for registration of arms transfers, safeguarding the exclusively civilian use of dual-purpose technology transfers and inter-State consultations on those matters. Papers presented at the seminar were later published by the Centre in a special booklet.

23. On 23 June 1993, the Centre held at its premises a workshop on hemispheric strategic issues for scholars, retired military officers, and diplomats from foreign diplomatic missions stationed in Lima and from the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

24. On the following day, 24 June, the Centre held its third annual seminar for the members of the Association of Military Attachés accredited in Peru on the role of the Latin American armed forces in the threshold of the twenty-first century, taking into account the current democratic wave and the prevailing peaceful conditions in the region. The seminar was repeated on 25 June at the Peruvian Centre for High Military Studies (CAEM) for its own students, as well as students of the Peruvian Army War College.

25. The Centre was represented by the Director at the following events: (a) a forum on hemispheric security at La Paz, Bolivia, at the invitation of the Escuela de Altos Estudios Nacionales (School of High National Studies), on 3 August 1992; and (b) the International Peace Day celebration hosted by the Permanent Peace Centre in Peru on 15 September 1992. On the former occasion, the Director participated as a guest speaker and on the latter, he delivered a keynote speech.

26. Despite financial difficulties, the Centre has managed to maintain a solid presence in the region through its publications programme and contacts with a regional network of public and private institutions. It has continued to publish and distribute its quarterly newsletter, the Boletin, to research centres, non-governmental organizations, libraries and other organizations throughout the region. Its reference library has continued to serve as a resource centre for students and researchers on issues of peace, security, disarmament and development in the region. Through contacts with universities, the Centre has also promoted undergraduate and graduate studies and research on disarmament.

27. The Centre has also provided assistance to the Government of Chile in the organization of a workshop on chemical weapons to take place at Santiago from 9-10 September 1993, and to the Government of Ecuador and its Diplomatic Academy in organizing a seminar on disarmament and security in Latin America to be held at Quito from 15 to 17 September 1993.

2. Staffing and finance

28. Following the establishment in 1991 by the General Assembly of the post of Director at the senior officer level under the regular budget, the Centre Director was appointed and assumed duty on 31 July 1991. The Director also undertakes the additional functions of the Director of the United Nations Information Centre at Lima. The Centre continues to share premises with the Information Centre.

29. Since the submission of the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/47/359), voluntary contributions in the amount of $103,243 have been pledged to the Centre; a total of $137,129 had been received as of July 1993. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Governments of Canada, Colombia, Italy, Mexico, Norway and Spain for their generous contributions to the Centre.

C. Regional Centre in Asia and the Pacific

30. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, established in 1988, functions under the auspices of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, which acts as the focal point for coordinating inputs to the activities of the Centre by Member States, non-governmental organizations, and pertinent organs, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system. The Centre is located at Kathmandu, Nepal.

1. Objectives and activities of the Centre

31. By its resolution 42/39 D of 30 November 1987, the General Assembly decided that the Regional Centre should provide, on request, substantive support for the initiatives and other activities mutually agreed upon by the Member States of the Asian region for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament, through appropriate utilization of available resources, and that it should also coordinate the implementation of regional activities in Asia under the World Disarmament Campaign (now the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme).

32. The Centre, which was inaugurated on 30 January 1989, continues to carry out its activities in accordance with the above mandate. While financial resources available to the Centre remain rather limited, the Centre managed to organize two major regional meetings respectively at Kathmandu and Kyoto, as well as 3 one-day seminars in Kyoto, Nagasaki and Hiroshima, respectively. Its activities also included disseminating information on United Nations activities in the field of disarmament, and answering inquiries from the general public, students and non-governmental organizations.

33. Since his appointment in September 1992, the Director has held a series of consultations with Member States at both New York and Kathmandu, as well as with academic researchers during the meetings organized by the Centre, to seek their views on how to maximize the use of the Centre and effectively implement its mandate. As was evident from the consultations, there was a wide recognition that the Centre should encourage regional and subregional dialogue for the enhancement of confidence-building and the promotion of disarmament and security through the organization of regional meetings with an agenda appropriately adjusted to focus on these issues. Also, strong support was expressed for the idea of creating a close network, linking the Centre and its constituencies within the region, as a way of exchanging data and information related to disarmament and security.

34. A regional meeting, the fourth in the series, entitled "National security and confidence-building in the Asia-Pacific region" was held at Kathmandu from 1-3 February 1993. The meeting was opened by the Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Girija Prasad Koirara. Thirty-eight participants from Governments, research institutes, the mass media and non-governmental organizations attended the meeting. Against the backdrop of continuing changes in the international and regional security environment, the meeting reviewed the new dimensions in political and military posture and the new types of challenges arising from internal or cross-national problems. The meeting also addressed national security and regional arms control questions, and border and territorial issues in the Asia-Pacific region. The major presentations made at the meeting were later published by the Office for Disarmament Affairs in its Topical Papers Series, No. 13.

35. In cooperation with the Government of Japan, the Regional Centre organized a disarmament conference entitled "National Security in the interdependent world", which was held at Kyoto, Japan, from 13 to 16 April 1993. The conference was opened by the Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. Kouji Kakizawa, the Governor of Kyoto Prefecture, Mr. Teiichi Aramaki, and the Mayor of Kyoto, Mr. Tomoyuki Tanabe.

36. Eighty participants from Governments, academia, research institutes, non-governmental organizations and the media within and outside the Asia-Pacific region attended the conference. The programme included two days of panel presentations by guest speakers followed by general discussions. In addition, two sessions were allocated to working groups for in-depth consideration of the issues dealt with by the conference.

37. The conference reviewed the complex and somewhat contradictory trends in the area of national security in the post-Cold War era, and attempted to shed light on new approaches and challenges in the field of disarmament in an increasingly interdependent world. The conference also considered non-proliferation through effective international control; the concept of sovereignty in the changing world; expansion of political dialogue and building confidence through regional organizations; and the challenges to regional security and disarmament measures. The papers presented at the conference were published by the Office for Disarmament Affairs in its Topical Papers Series, No. 16.

38. In conjunction with the disarmament conference held at Kyoto, the Centre cooperated with the local authorities in organizing 3 one-day seminars on, respectively, the following subjects: "Early warning, preventive diplomacy and disarmament", held at Kyoto on 15 April 1993; "New disarmament agenda and international security in the interdependent world", held at Nagasaki on 17 April; and "Building on dialogue and searching for common security in Asia and the Pacific", held at Hiroshima on 18 April. Each of these seminars consisted of presentations on given specific subjects by five to seven panelists, followed by question-and-answer sessions, during which meaningful interactions between the panelists and audience took place.

39. Preparations are under way to convene further regional meetings, including the one to be held at Kathmandu early next year. Conducting studies on specific disarmament and security issues prevailing in the region is also under consideration.

2. Staffing and finance

40. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 44/117, the establishment of the posts of Director at the Senior Officer level at each of the three regional centres were phased sequentially and annually over the 1990-1992 period. The post of Director for the Regional Centre located at Kathmandu was established on a temporary basis for two years, effective 1 January 1992. Subsequently, the Director was appointed on 1 September 1992. The General Assembly is expected to review at its forty-eighth session the need of establishing this Director post on a permanent basis.

41. The UNDP at Kathmandu and the United Nations Information Officer have also assisted the Centre in carrying out its mandate.

42. Since the submission of the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly in 1992 (A/47/359), voluntary contributions in the amount of $45,549 have been pledged to the Centre, and a total of $35,980 had been received as of July 1993. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the

Governments of Italy, Japan, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea and Thailand, as well as Rissho Kosei-Kai, a Japanese non-governmental organization, for their generous contributions.